

WDS:mfd:23 Mar 64
MEMORANDUM

REF 3
Dr. Goldberg
March 23, 1964

Int.

TO: J. Lee Rankin
FROM: W. David Slawson
SUBJECT: Comments on Dr. Goldberg's Proposed Outline of the Report of the Commission

1. I think that it is obvious that our report should be documented as thoroughly as possible. When the Commission itself has interviewed a witness, or when a staff member has interviewed a witness, the written record of the interview will usually solve our documentation problem. However, there are many instances where this will not be practical. For example, the Mexican trip concerns all sorts of routine information as to when a paycheck would probably have arrived at a certain post office, what the usual procedures are for keeping records in the American and Mexican Immigration Offices, the fact that a photograph which purports to be of a passenger manifest on a Mexican busline is in fact just that, etc. In most of these instances I see no harm in referring directly to the FBI or Secret Service report involved and permitting the report itself to be published as part of the public record. In a few situations the report may have to be "sterilized," i.e., references to the office or the name of the special agent or a few other sensitive words deleted. A more difficult problem will be the use of those reports which involve statements by informants. Anyway, I believe that we might begin to explore this problem with the FBI and the Secret Service now. If these two agencies are going to take a strong stand against making any reports at all public, we may be faced with the job of gathering all kinds of routine testimony, duplicating what is already in this report, on our own, and if we have to do this, we should know it soon.

2. Part V, Conclusions and Recommendations, should be omitted entirely. It would seem sufficient to state the conclusions and recommendations as they come up in the natural course of the narrative in the report, i.e., for example, our

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conclusion as to whether Lee Harvey Oswald was the assassin would be stated under IIIA, which treats the question, "Who Was the Assassin?" Gathering all the conclusions and recommendations together and repeating them in a separate Part of the report seems to serve no worthwhile purpose, especially if it turns out that our report involves no startling or highly important recommendations.

3/ I think we should consider adding a section which would contain refutations of all the various factual misconceptions that have attained notoriety since the assassination. I have in mind here such things as the so-called "fact" that there exists a photograph showing Lee Harvey Oswald standing on the sidewalk outside the TSED Building at the same moment as the presidential car is driving by. Many of the magazine articles that spin out theories that Oswald was an FBI agent, or that he was an agent of the "communist Jewish conspiracy," obtained their apparent plausibility because they are based on such "facts" as these that are not facts at all. I mention this because I do not think that Part IV, Analysis of Theories and Rumors, as presently conceived by Dr. Goldberg, would cover factual misconceptions, and it is, after all, the facts rather than the theories that must be set straight in the public's mind, because if given the proper facts the public itself in the long run will probably not be misled by wild theories.